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Russia Demands Release of Maduro After U.S. Military Strikes Venezuela

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A fire at Fuerte Tiuna, Venezuela's largest military complex, is seen from a distance after a series of explosions in Caracas on Jan. 3, 2026. **STR / AFP**

Russia's Foreign Ministry on Saturday called for the release of Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro and his wife from U.S. custody after President Donald Trump announced that they were captured during military strikes on the capital city of Caracas.

"We firmly call on the U.S. leadership to reconsider this position and release the lawfully elected president of a sovereign country and his wife," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement, stressing the need to resolve the dramatic confrontation through diplomacy.

In a separate message, the ministry said Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov spoke by phone to Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodriguez Gomez, during which he expressed his "solidarity with the Venezuelan people in the face of armed aggression."

Anonymous sources told Reuters that Gomez was currently located in Moscow. Russian authorities dismissed that report as "fake."

“Russia will continue to support the course pursued by its Bolivarian leadership to defend the country’s national interests and sovereignty,” the Foreign Ministry said. It urged restraint and warned against further escalation.

Russia’s embassy in Caracas said it is operating as usual and remains in constant contact with the Venezuelan authorities and Russian citizens in the South American country. It did not report any Russian citizens as having been injured in the attacks.

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Trump said the American military carried out a “large-scale strike” against Venezuela on Saturday morning, adding that Maduro and his wife were captured “in conjunction with U.S. law enforcement” and were being flown to New York, where they face U.S. criminal charges.

In comments to The New York Times shortly after his announcement, Trump hailed what he called a “brilliant operation.”

“A lot of good planning and a lot of great, great troops and great people,” he was quoted as saying. “It was a brilliant operation, actually.”

Russia’s Foreign Ministry said Maduro’s capture would represent an “unacceptable encroachment on the sovereignty of an independent state.”

Trump is expected to give a news conference about the U.S. strikes at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, at 11 a.m. local time on Saturday.

According to CNN, Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino López said the U.S. attack impacted urban areas across Venezuela, with missiles and rockets fired from American combat helicopters.

He said Venezuelan authorities are currently trying to assess how many people were wounded and killed in the attacks.

“This invasion represents the greatest outrage the country has suffered,” López said, vowing that Venezuela would resist the presence of foreign troops in the country

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Saturday’s attack on Venezuela and capture of Maduro came after months of the United States dramatically increasing its military presence in the Caribbean, amassing thousands of troops and over a dozen warships in the region.

Since September, U.S. forces have carried out strikes on boats the Trump Administration alleges were involved in drug trafficking in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific.

But Trump has also repeatedly indicated that he is interested in regime change in Venezuela, accusing authorities in Caracas of “narco-terrorism” and stealing U.S. oil fields.

In an interview with Fox News later on Saturday, the president said the U.S. is going to be “very strongly involved” in Venezuela’s oil industry after the operation to capture Maduro.

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